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New York

President:	Mr. Mehdiyev	(Azerbaijan)
Members:	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Araud
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	India	Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Portugal	Mr. Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Mashabane
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia (S/2012/283)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia (S/2012/283)

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Somalia to participate in this meeting.

I request the Protocol Officer to escort His Excellency Mr. Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, President of the Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Republic, to his seat at the Council table.

Mr. Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, President of the Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Republic, was escorted to a seat at the Council table.

The President: On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency President Ahmed.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Augustine Mahiga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/283, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on Somalia.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, President of the Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Republic.

President Ahmed (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to start my statement by extending my thanks to the Security Council and by expressing our appreciation to it for its continued and vital support to achieving peace in Somalia. The visits by Council members to Djibouti in June 2008 and to Nairobi in May 2011 to look into and investigate the distressing events taking place in Somalia and efforts to bring about peace, as well as the relevant resolutions adopted by the Council on the same topic, clearly demonstrated the Council's determination to resolve the Somali issue. All those endeavours reflect its good intentions and the pressing desire to restore security and stability in Somalia and to put an end to the suffering experienced by its people for nearly two decades.

My thanks and appreciation also go to United Nations Members, to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon — who, at international forums, underscores the importance of restoring security and stability in Somalia — and to the African Union (AU) countries that fully support the Somali Government and people. I would also like to thank the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which has issued resolute and successful decisions on the Somali issue. IGAD sent the finest young men to Somalia to stand by our people and to protect innocent Somali citizens, as well as our independence, freedoms, fundamental rights and honour, which were being violated by the advocates of war, looting and chaos. Its courageous decisions brought about the expulsion of Al-Qaida and Al-Shabaab from many areas that are now calm and stable after our Government received the support of AU forces, backed by the international community. I would be remiss if I did not thank all States and international and regional organizations that have contributed to alleviating the suffering of our citizens, who were in dire need of assistance in past years.

Owing to the disorder and instability prevailing in the country, the terrorist movements of Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaida took the opportunity to launch a merciless war against the Somali people and committed crimes and atrocities in the name of jihad, under the guise of religion, which is completely opposed to such atrocities. That forced Somalis to emigrate and live in camps in neighbouring and other countries, or to become internally displaced persons. Our people placed their hope in their Government and the international community, in anticipation of a new dawn of security and safety emerging.

Our people, who suffered the worst acts of violence and frequent crises, did not yield to the violence and oppression, but continued to seek a peaceful solution that was satisfactory to all. It strove for the formation of a national unity Government in order to lead the country to the security and stability it deserves and to unite all sectors of Somali society, without isolating any party from the other national groups. Priority was given to a total of 15 reconciliation conferences held in neighbouring countries, culminating in the fourth Djibouti Peace Conference in 2009. That

gave rise to the formation of this Government in order to achieve lasting peace and prosperity, as well as the well-being and comprehensive development of its citizens.

The Government of the Somali Republic, which receives the support and assistance of the international community, has withstood the blows of its opponents among Al-Qaida, Al-Shabaab and international terrorists. It has succeeded in expelling them from most of the country and has regained control in many regions. Today, it administers its own affairs and engages in reconstruction. It has returned the smile to the faces of Somali children, exhausted by war and constant sedition, having expelled those who sowed the seeds of discord and internal disputes.

The Transitional Federal Government appreciates the importance of the transition to normalcy through the implementation of the policies set down in the road map, outlining the development of a permanent constitution for the country and its ratification by clan leaders, intellectuals, members of the diaspora, social organizations for young women, and community members entitled to participate in its ratification. The draft constitution is the result of eight years of painstaking efforts sustained by Somali and international experts to draft its provisions and study its contents, with the aim of making it a comprehensive text that takes the interests of Somalia into account and responds to its requirements and current situation.

The new draft constitution is not the result of happenstance or emotion, but has emerged from the aspirations of the Somalis, who continue to await the end of the transitional system and a return to the regular system of governance. We hope and believe that the constitution is one of the best in the world in form and substance. It is the outcome of the deliberations of Somali scientists and specialists, supervised by committees of the clergy and senior citizens. I assure the Council that the draft constitution is responsive to the interests of the Somali people and in line with Islamic principles, traditions, systems and norms. Following its approval by the Constituent Assembly, the draft will be reviewed and subsequently voted on.

I left Mogadishu as the leaders of Somali clans continued to meet with a view to selecting 825 representatives who are trusted by all the Somali clans to ratify the draft constitution of the Somali Republic. Today, after all these efforts, we commit ourselves before the international community and affirm that we mean to pave the way for the selection of a national parliament representing all sectors of Somali society, including the clergy, youth, women and children. The parliament must be ready to choose a new president in order to form a Government of national unity composed of qualified men and women able to manage the key components of the State with competence and wisdom, distributing our national resources equally to all members of society on the basis of the legislative, executive and judicial powers of the State.

In addition to the steps we have already taken, we would like to assure Council members once again that the process of reconciliation through negotiation has begun between the Government and the people of the north in order to reach an agreement ending the dispute with our brothers who have sought to secede unilaterally. We will pursue these efforts until the waters are calm and national cohesion is restored, returning the situation in Somalia to what it once was. The management of the country will be in the hands of the Somali people in a democratic society where everyone is equal and no one is marginalized.

We draw the Council's attention to the fact that we are on the threshold of a new phase. We have come a long way in the implementation of the road map. We need the international community to redouble its efforts to assist us in completing the current stage on time so as not to open an opportunity for the return of anarchy and terrorism, to safeguard the achievements made to date, and to justify the money that has been spent and the blood shed to get where we are.

My country, which suffered a long period of chaos and instability after the collapse of the constitutional institutions and administrative services, needs today to make further efforts to revive its institutions so that they may perform their vital functions and serve the people of Somalia. I believe that the current stage is conducive to the re-establishment of these institutions and that the conditions exist to justify these efforts following the defeat of Al-Qaida in Somalia and given the growing international interest in developing our institutions as well as the readiness of our people to participate in making these institutions perform the desired functions.

The next stage will require us to create the appropriate climate for this work. It is essential that Somalia be stable, safe and free of chaos and violence if it is to rebuild its infrastructure and Government institutions and to select Government officials and administrators to manage the various governorates and the training of cadres capable of managing the Government bodies, business services, hospitals and schools, and of undertaking other tasks necessary to serve the members of the Somali people. We therefore expect the Security Council to support us in the following tasks.

We must politically and economically strengthen the work of the Constituent Assembly assigned to ratify the new constitution by providing the financial means necessary for the success of its work. In this task, we have received none of the anticipated international assistance.

We must promote reconciliation conferences to preserve the national unity of Somalia and comprehensive peace throughout Somali territory.

We must take a firm stand against those who would hinder the achievement of peace in Somalia, including those destructive individuals who would fish in troubled waters and act to return the country to the years of loss and fighting.

We must support the building of a Somali army capable of protecting the homeland and its independence and territorial integrity.

We must strengthen national security and train the police forces and national intelligence officers, arming them with up-to-date security equipment and qualifying them to undertake the responsibilities entrusted to them.

We must develop a comprehensive plan to address the terrorist movements that are stepping up their activities in Somalia. These movements will be difficult to eradicate from the region unless concerted international efforts are made to address them.

Without effective security forces able to impose law and order and to act as a powerful deterrent to criminals and aggressors of the innocent and defenceless, it will not be possible to protect fundamental freedoms and human rights in a country rampant with gangs of pirates and terrorist movements that are killing innocent citizens and imposing ransom and royalties on commercial ships crossing international waters. That will not be possible unless the Council allows the Somali Government to import the necessary weapons for the security services and lift the arms embargo that has been imposed on it.

Further, international bodies and organizations and the international community in general should be invited to contribute to reconstruction in Somalia and to work to reactivate economic institutions and services in the country.

Continued support for the forces of the African Union Mission in Somalia should include an increase in their numbers and military assets in order to improve their combat efficiency and enable them to address the Al-Shabaab terrorist movement, which recently announced its complete merger with Al-Qaida.

Financial support should be provided to local administrations that have been established in areas newly liberated from Al-Qaida.

Current members of Parliament should receive their allowances and salaries to compensate them for the service they have provided to the nation during their term of office. They should not be exposed to the risk of neglect and oblivion.

The foregoing is a mere drop in a sea of turbulent waves and represents only a small part of the larger task that the Somali people face at this critical transitional juncture. We believe that the Council is well aware of the deteriorating situation in our country, and of its own responsibility for protecting the Somali people and their fundamental freedoms.

I hope that I am not being overly optimistic in saying that the Somali people, who are an integral part of human society, believe that the international community will not leave them bleeding and that the eyes of the world are upon them, in particular following the recent London Conference, which was attended by representatives of 55 countries, with a positive outcome that showed genuine sympathy with the Somali people.

The British Government led by David Cameron deserves our thanks and appreciation for organizing and managing the Conference. We hope that it will pursue its efforts to bring peace to Somalia, and we extend our thanks and appreciation to all States, international and regional organizations and personalities who attended the Conference. We urge them to maintain their commitment to achieving peace

in Somalia and to attend the conference to be held in Turkey next month.

The international community, through its international and regional organizations, played an effective role in the delivery of aid and humanitarian assistance to those affected by famine and drought in Somalia last year. Before concluding, I would therefore like to invite all States and countries that pledged contributions to alleviate the burden on the Somali people, who are in dire need of assistance, to fulfil their pledges. I thank them for their commitment and for the assistance they extended to us during the crisis. We hope that the outstanding aid and assistance will be forthcoming, along with continued support to enable those in need to resume their activities and a standard of living appropriate to people living in the twenty-first century. I also hope that they will help us to rebuild our damaged infrastructure and to restore all the services our citizens need.

In conclusion, I would like to extend all thanks and appreciation to the members of the Council and to wish them success.

The President: I thank President Ahmed for his statement.

I give the floor to Mr. Mahiga.

Mr. Mahiga: I thank you, Mr. President, for giving me this opportunity to present the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/283) and to provide the Council with additional briefing on Somali. I thank the Council for its continued support to me and to the United Nations Political Office for Somalia. I also recognize the presence of His Excellency Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, President of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of the Somali Republic, who has just addressed the Council. His presence here today is an expression of his commitment to partnering with the international community to end the transition. I also wish to thank the President and the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia for the excellent working relations we enjoy in Mogadishu in our working with the Transitional Federal Institutions.

We are entering the most critical stage in ending the transition in Somalia by August. We have made considerable advances in preparing for that end state. We have taken significant steps in the constitution-making process for Somalia, as required by both the Mbagathi and Djibouti agreements. The draft constitution will be submitted to the principals, pending its submission to a national Constituent Assembly for provisional adoption later this month. That is essential for ending the transition and sets the stage for further deliberation on the document in the post-August period.

To that end, we have brought together in Mogadishu a group of 135 traditional elders who are currently engaged in selecting 825 members of the national Constituent Assembly, in line with the traditional system of 4.5 clan representation. In the absence of direct elections now, the traditional elders are the basis of legitimacy for the Constituent Assembly.

The elders, who have been brought from all over Somalia, including the newly recovered areas, are a symbol of national unity and of the commitment to ending the transition. Furthermore, the elders will dissolve the current Parliament and proceed to select members of a new, leaner Parliament on more merit-based criteria. The new Parliament will proceed to give us a new political leadership in July and a new Government in August.

Since their arrival in Mogadishu, the elders have engaged in a self-validation exercise on their authentic origins and representativeness. The principal signatories will meet later this week to appoint a technical selection committee to manage the Constituent Assembly and other issues related to the provisional adoption of the draft constitution and the selection of the new Parliament.

Those processes constitute one of the pillars of the road map that will continue beyond August. The inclusion of areas newly recovered from Al-Shabaab insurgents remains a top priority in political outreach and reconciliation as the Transitional Federal Government continues to bring more territory under its control beyond Mogadishu. Through the allied militias, supported by an expanded African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the engagement of Ethiopia, the insurgents are retreating and fast losing control of swathes of territory.

The new territories bring with them a new population under Government control. However, Al-Shabaab's retreat is creating new challenges.

Retreating insurgents are spilling over into the relatively stable regional states of Puntland and

Somaliland from south-central Somalia. There is also an increase in asymmetrical warfare behind AMISOM lines in Mogadishu and other recovered areas. Therefore, as Al-Shabaab retreats, the TFG must be assisted in carrying out the following functions: establishing local administration, which would include previously elected leaders who were displaced by the insurgents; establishing political and administrative authority at the local level; and consolidating security through local security committees. The recovery of new territory must be accompanied by the provision of basic social services, including the rule of law and other social infrastructure, as well as economic services, as part of a peace dividend package.

Efforts to strengthen outreach and reconciliation with the regional and emerging administrations continue. In that regard, both the Transitional Federal Government and Somaliland have appointed committees through which the two entities will engage in dialogue on the future of Somalia, as called for at the London Conference in February. The two stakeholders are committed to dialogue and have sought my good offices to keep the dialogue alive as we work out the modalities, including the agenda and timing for the discussions.

AMISOM, for its part, is now on a more secure and predictable funding footing, following the adoption and implementation of resolution 2036 (2012). That should enable the force to project itself with greater effectiveness in the three new sectors of its operations. I would like to express my appreciation to the international community for the generous contributions it continues to make to AMISOM. In particular, I would like to mention the support of the European Union, which covers the allowances of AMISOM civilian and military personnel. The United States of America has also made significant contributions of equipment and supplies to AMISOM. I would also like to commend the United Kingdom, Japan and other donors that have provided generous financial contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of AMISOM. Since the maintenance of international peace and security is a collective responsibility, I encourage other Member States to join those traditional supporters in their commendable efforts to support AMISOM.

At the meeting of the Joint Security Committee held in Mogadishu on 7 and 8 May, the participants agreed on more coordinated formation of Somali forces and stressed the importance of integrating the Transitional Federal Government's allied forces under a unified command. They also agreed, among other things, on the importance of the National Security and Stabilization Plan being put in place as an exit strategy for AMISOM and on the need for greater coordination and cooperation in dealing with disengaged former combatants — or defectors, as they are sometimes called.

I thank the Government of Japan for its comprehensive assistance in building the TFG police force. The security sector development of the TFG also needs greater focus on developing the justice and corrections system, to strengthen rule-of-law institutions.

There is progress in the area of promoting human rights, and resources are needed in that area, including in the protection of children and of human rights defenders and journalists.

The humanitarian situation remains fragile in Somalia. While a rapid scale-up in aid was effective in ending famine conditions in the country, the gains are very fragile and can easily be reversed without continued assistance.

In our continued efforts to address the problem of piracy, we held a ministerial-level meeting in London on 12 May, at which the Djibouti Code of Conduct was addressed, in accordance with article 13 of the Code. There have also been significant efforts, following the London Conference communiqué, in evolving a comprehensive strategy against piracy, as an emerging challenge that needs to be addressed both on land and at sea. However, the fundamental issue in dealing with piracy remains the establishment of the rule of law in Somalia.

We face a number of challenges in our efforts to complete the implementation of the road map, including tight timelines and the unavailability of resources. However, in the absence of the requisite resources, and of financial, logistic and human requirements, we can accomplish only so much. The lack of funding for implementing the road map in the remaining three months is of serious concern to all of us, including the TFG, as President Ahmed has just expressed.

Finally, allow me to raise the issue of the threat posed to the peace process by spoiler behaviour in

Somalia and beyond the region. We must deal with those elements before they succeed in undermining the peace process. The spoilers feel that the end of the transition will jeopardize their privileged positions and standing in Somalia. They are therefore employing various methods to obstruct and reverse the gains made in the implementation of the road map. On 1 May, in the spirit of collaboration, UNPOS, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and AMISOM issued a warning to all potential spoilers that non-compliance with or active obstruction of the road map will be followed by the naming and shaming of individuals. People named could subsequently be referred to the IGAD Council of Ministers, along with our recommendations for the immediate imposition of specific measures and restrictions, such as regional travel bans on some individuals. The effectiveness of such measures will of course be greatly enhanced if they are supported by the authority of the Security Council.

As Somalia faces the greatest opportunity to end the transition, after so much investment by the international community, we must complete the tasks at hand. We must provide timely logistical and financial support to enable us to complete the implementation of the road map before August, with strengthened international cooperation and coordination. In that regard, we welcome the initiative of the Government of Turkey to partner with the United Nations in convening the international conference in Istanbul early next month. The conference will add momentum and focus attention on the road map to end the transition. It will also define elements of the post-August strategy and strengthen Somali ownership of the process, in partnership with the regional and international stakeholders. We look forward to that conference.

The President: I thank Mr. Mahiga for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Parham (United Kingdom): I am very grateful to you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to discuss Somalia at such an important time, to the Secretary-General for his latest report (S/2012/283) and to his Special Representative Augustine Mahiga for the briefing he has just given us. We greatly appreciate the Special Representative's work and the efforts of his team and all the United Nations agencies active in Somalia. I would also like to thank the President of Somalia for being with us here today and for his contribution to this debate.

I would like to address two key issues — the political process, and security in Somalia. First, our number-one priority now must be the political process. There are only three months to go until the end of the transition. It is imperative that we increase the momentum, to ensure that the national Constituent Assembly is convened as soon as possible, in a way that is open and representative. The ultimate responsibility for delivering the end of the transition lies with the Somali leaders, but we, the international community, must continue to provide the necessary support. The United Kingdom is providing £1 million to the United Nations to support the process, as well as technical support staff. We call on others to provide support in line with the needs identified by the United Nations.

We must also support the process politically, providing incentives to progress and being prepared to take action against any who seek to block or undermine the process. I welcome the letter from the United Nations, the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, addressing potential spoilers. I reaffirm the United Kingdom's commitment to taking action against those who seek to spoil the process, including any attempt to fix the selection of members of the Constituent Assembly.

There are increasing reports within Somalia that the public is not content with the process. I want to be clear that disagreement with the process itself is not spoiling action. Dissent is not a bad thing; it shows engagement with the process. Public debate is a key element of democracy, but it is vital that space be provided within the process for those dissenting voices to be heard and taken into account without derailing the process in its entirety.

Much of the discontent appears to be fuelled by suspicion and a lack of information. It is therefore vital that the process be made as transparent as possible. The United Nations and the Garoowe signatories need to make public the list of elders, the process by which they will select the national Constituent Assembly's members, and the process for dealing with contentious issues within the constitution.

When ministers meet at the end of the month in Istanbul, they will assess progress on delivering the

end of the transition. It is for the Somali leaders, supported by United Nations Political Office for Somalia to demonstrate delivery of progress against the timelines set out in the road map and the Garoowe principles by that point.

Secondly, while our focus is currently on the end of the transition, it is no less important that we continue to build security and stability across Somalia. Resolution 2036 (2012) paved the way for an enhanced and expanded presence of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). We welcome the efforts of the African Union (AU) and the countries of the region to put in place arrangements to implement that mandate. It is vital that those efforts continue and in particular that the rehatting of Kenyan troops take place as soon as possible.

Although resolution 2036 (2012) provided enhanced support for AMISOM, there is still a requirement for additional funding to provide key force enablers and equipment. In the past year, the United Kingdom has contributed £16 million without caveats to the United Nations Trust Fund for AMISOM. We call on others to continue to contribute to the Trust Fund, and on additional donors to provide funding for long-term requirements, such as the troop stipends currently funded by the European Union.

But we also need to enhance our efforts to develop Somali security capacity. AMISCM needs effective Somali national security forces alongside whom they can fight and to whom they can eventually hand over. We welcome the AU efforts to identify the immediate needs of the national security forces. We believe that the existing provisions of the arms embargo allow sufficient flexibility to meet those needs and that there are important security benefits in maintaining the embargo.

We also need to increase our efforts on longer-term capacity-building in the security and justice sectors as a whole to provide security and access to justice for people across Somalia. Enhanced security will be key to underpinning efforts at stabilization and the development of better governance, particularly in newly recovered areas.

We are entering a critical period in Somalia. The Garoowe signatories need to decide. Do they want to play their part in bringing peace to Somalia after 21 years of war, improving the lives of thousands of Somali people and setting Somalia on the path to recovery? Or do they want to let this opportunity slide and condemn their country to further years of conflict and turmoil? I urge them to make the right choice. If they do so, the United Nations and the international community will work with them and provide the support they need.

We look forward to discussing these issues further in Istanbul.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, Mr. Mahiga, for his briefing, and welcome President Ahmed.

Somalia stands at a critical moment in its history. One year ago, Al-Shabaab controlled and terrorized large swaths of Somalia. Millions were at risk of starvation, and the country's leaders focused more on feuding among themselves than on working to improve the condition of the Somali people. one year ago in Nairobi, the Security Council delivered a blunt message to the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) that it risked losing international support if it did not get its act together and resolve its differences.

Today, Somalia is in a different and better place, but significant challenges lie ahead. The mandate of the Transitional Federal Government comes to an end in August. Any delay or back sliding in implementing the transition is totally unacceptable. Somalia and the wider region cannot afford to revert to the endless cycles of violence and suffering that have plagued the country and threatened the region for decades.

There are, encouragingly, signs of promise for the country and its people. For the first time in a generation, Somalia has a solid plan for creating a functional State and the conditions for its implementation continue to ripen. In the last few months, the TFG, as well as other roadmap signatories and the international community, have taken important steps to implement the road map to end the transition as defined by the Garoowe principles. A draft constitution has been circulated to the road map signatories. Elders have been selected to appoint delegates to the Constituent Assembly and are meeting now to do so. The security situation across the country has also improved. Areas on the outskirts of Mogadishu and the key cities of Beledweyne, Baidoa and Jowhar in south-western Somalia have recently been liberated from Al-Shabaab.

The United States commends the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali National Security Forces for their significant military achievements and security gains. The sacrifices made by AMISOM and Somali troops are testament to their will and dedication to bring peace and stability to Somalia. Reflecting the improved security situation, the United Nations Political Office for Somalia has returned to Mogadishu. And although the humanitarian situation remains extremely fragile, thanks to the actions of United Nations humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations and the generosity of the international community, the famine has substantially abated.

The unanimous adoption of resolution 2036 (2012) on 22 February, followed by the London Conference on Somalia, demonstrated the strong and unified commitment of the international community to Somalia's future. The United States welcomes the upcoming second Istanbul Conference on Somalia, which should push the political transition process further towards completion.

While Somalis with international support have made progress, we cannot afford to lose momentum. Critical and difficult work remains, and the Somali people will hold the TFG, road map signatories and other stakeholders accountable for meeting the transition timetable. As the London Conference declared in February, the Kampala Accord deadline is firm. There must be no extension of the TFG mandate beyond 20 August. The Constituent Assembly should convene to consider and adopt the interim constitution, setting the stage for other important steps, including the appointment of a new, smaller parliament and indirect elections of a Speaker and President. Informing Somalis about the draft constitution and the road map implementation process is fundamental to their ultimate success. But as the Secretary-General observes in his report (S/2012/283), approval of the interim constitution by the Constituent Assembly will be the beginning, not the end, of the process.

Having noted some of the important progress achieved since the Security Council visited the region, let me now turn to the significant challenges ahead for Somalia.

As we were tragically reminded only two weeks ago by the suicide attack against a parliamentary delegation in Dhuusamarreeb and last month by the suicide bombing at the national theatre, Al-Shabaab remains a major threat to the stability of Somalia. Its shocking and ruthless attacks on innocent civilians and its ongoing ban on 17 humanitarian organizations demonstrate its total disregard for the Somali people and its disregard for human life. The United States condemns all Al-Shabaab terrorist attacks, which kill Government officials and innocent civilians alike.

Because Al Shabaab will continue to perpetrate terrorism and exploit any opening to sow instability and derail progress in Somalia, it is of paramount importance to expand security in stabilized areas in order to prevent Al-Shabaab from regaining a foothold. It requires AMISOM to be fully staffed so that it can fulfil its mandate. The African Union and additional troop contributors should quickly reach agreement on AMISOM's concept of operations. Failure to do so will not only reflect negatively on AMISOM and the African Union but, worse, undermine the security of the Somali people.

Moreover, although Somali national security forces will figure prominently in expanded AMISOM operations, they are hampered by supply shortages and gaps in logistical capacity. Since 2007, the United States has contributed over $106 million to strengthen the Somali security sector. We urge all Member States, especially new donors, to help the Somali people take the lead in providing for their own security and to coordinate bilateral support through the Joint Security Committee of the Transitional Federal Government, co-chaired by the United Nations and the African Union.

To ensure lasting stability in Somalia, it is necessary but not sufficient to continue to pressure Al-Shabaab and to strengthen national and international security forces. Criminal activity that finances terrorism, undermines domestic governance and distorts the local economy must be addressed as well. In this regard, the United States strongly supports the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia and will continue working with international partners and Somali leaders to end the scourge of piracy. Similarly, kidnapping for ransom imperils Somalia's progress and poses an increasing threat to all nations and their citizens. We must work together to strengthen law enforcement and other capacities to prevent hostage-takings and ensure that hostage-takers cannot obtain ransoms.

Finally, although the United Nations declared the end of the famine in Somalia in February, the humanitarian situation in southern and central Somalia remains precarious. More than 2.5 million Somalis still need emergency assistance. There are more than 980,000 Somali refugees, some of whom have lived in exile for more than 20 years. We commend Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Yemen and other countries in the region for hosting Somali refugees.

Since 2011, the United States has committed $1.1 billion to the humanitarian emergency in the Horn of Africa, including more than $260 million expressly for Somalia. The international community must do more to provide immediate life-saving assistance; to address the long-term needs of refugees, internally displaced persons and others affected by drought and conflict; and to build capacity in the region to mitigate the impact of future shocks that we know will come. Millions of lives are at stake.

I want to reiterate our strong support for AMISOM and our commitment to working with the international community to help Somalia face these challenges and realize a brighter future. International support, however, cannot be taken for granted. During the next four months, we have a unique opportunity to ensure that Somalia concludes its transition on time, but the onus remains on Somalia's leaders to seize this moment and establish a strong foundation for peace and stability. The people of Somalia, who have suffered too long, deserve nothing less.

Mr. Mashabane (South Africa): I thank you very much, Mr. President, for giving us the opportunity to participate in this important debate. We wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2012/283), as well as his Special Representative, Ambassador Augustine Mahiga, for his detailed briefing on the recent developments in Somalia. We also wish to welcome to this meeting President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed of the Somali Republic, and we want to thank him for his wide-ranging statement.

Somalia is on the verge of making a decisive break with its most recent past, marked by conflict, crisis and instability. Recent months have seen determined and deliberate action by the Somali people, supported by the international community, to address in a sustained and concerted manner the political, humanitarian and security challenges confronting the country. In this regard, we welcome the significant progress made by the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in implementing the September 2011 road map. Most notably, the Garoowe Conferences I and II have culminated in important principles and decisions that should guide the political and constitutional processes for ending the transition. We welcome in particular the agreements reached by the stakeholders during these Conferences.

With the end of transition, fast approaching on 20 August, South Africa welcomes the establishment of the Implementation Support Unit in the Office of the Prime Minister to expedite the delivery of key tasks and benchmarks. We look forward to the finalization of the nomination process of the 825 members of the Constituent Assembly by traditional elders. In this regard, it would be important to ensure that the selection process is inclusive and transparent and that the Constituent Assembly is representative and comprised of the agreed percentage of woman representatives. We are encouraged that the legitimate and reasonable concerns of key stakeholders regarding the Constitutional process will be taken into account, particularly if they have the potential to frustrate the outcome of this process.

In the remaining months, the Constituent Assembly will have to adopt a provisional draft constitution and agree on a new federal parliament. We look forward to the speedy completion of these important processes, to be followed by the election of a new President and the appointment of a new Prime Minister in July and August, respectively.

While we welcome these positive developments, we note with concern that challenges remain that could have negative impact on the implementation of the road map. We urge Somalis across the political spectrum to put their differences aside and focus on the common good of the country. Progress and peace can be achieved only by a united Somalia. We wish to recall the readiness of both the African Union and the Security Council to sanction spoilers who frustrate the implementation of the road map.

The joint letter issued recently by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the African Union and the United Nations reaffirms the determination of the international community to give full effect to resolution 1844 (2008), indicating that action will be taken against those who obstruct and undermine stability in Somalia.

The future of Somalia must be determined by the Somali people and the solutions to its current challenges must be Somali-owned. My delegation therefore wishes to urge the political leadership in Somalia to set its differences aside and to put the interests of the country above its own in order to seize the existing window of opportunity for the country to abandon the instability of its recent past.

South Africa notes the funding gap of $12 million for implementing key aspects of the road map. We share the concern of the Secretary-General that this could jeopardize the significant progress achieved so far. We call on the international community to continue its support for the TFG during this critical time.

My delegation acknowledges the important gains registered by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the security forces of Somalia's neighbours and the Somali national security forces. These security gains have laid the foundation for extending the authority of the TFG beyond Mogadishu, providing an enabling environment for establishing a United Nations presence in the capital, and creating a security environment conducive to facilitating the return of the international diplomatic and business communities. The military successes must be accompanied by reconciliation and stabilization, and we encourage national efforts towards this end. The international community must therefore continue its investment in AMISOM and in the Somali national security forces. In this regard, South Africa welcomes the recent "uncaveated" support by the United Kingdom, Sweden and Denmark to the AMISOM Trust Fund.

We continue to condemn the asymmetric attacks by the armed opposition against Government, civilian and United Nations targets. We underline that the strengthening of the Somali national security forces must remain an important benchmark in the international community's efforts to ensure sustainable peace. We are therefore concerned that the capacity-building of the Somali military and police force is constrained by the limited ability to pay and equip operational troops and pay arrears in police salaries. We join the Secretary-General in encouraging Member States with the necessary capabilities to assist AMISOM and Somali forces in building their capacity to prevent attacks and to improve civilian security.

In addition to progress on the political and security front, attention must also be given to the humanitarian challenges still confronting the country. We should further ensure stabilization and the delivery of basic services in areas recovered from Al-Shabaab. Funding by the international community for the Mogadishu Stabilization and Recovery Plan therefore remains a priority. Additionally, investment by the international community in the private sector development of Somalia, including its road, water and energy infrastructure, would ensure the long-term development of the country. In that regard, we look forward to the upcoming second Istanbul conference on Somalia, to be held from 31 May to 1 June, as an important opportunity for the international community to invest in the long-term economic future and stability of Somalia.

In conclusion, South Africa will play its part in supporting efforts that can help bring lasting peace, security and stability to Somalia. In that regard, the South African Government, on 13 March, signed an agreement on the establishment of diplomatic relations with Somalia, during the visit of the Minister for Foreign Affairs to South Africa. South Africa is committed to providing capacity- and institution-building, socio-economic support, as well as specified training in key Government sectors.

With three months of the transition remaining, the political leadership in Somalia, with the support of the international community, must take full advantage of the opportunities in the political and security sphere in placing the country on a trajectory of sustained peace, stability and long-term development.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to welcome the President of the Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Republic, Mr. Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General and his Special Representative Augustine Mahiga for their briefings and for their personal commitment to stabilization in Somalia.

The Kampala Accord of 9 June 2011, the Mogadishu road map of 6 September 2011, the reinforcement of support for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) decided in September 2011, and the thorough reconfiguration of AMISOM decided in February by the Security Council were all decisive stages aimed at a single objective, namely, stabilizing the political and security situation in

Somalia. Those stages have signalled an unprecedented support by the international community for Somalia with a view to altering the destiny of that country. The international community has done its duty. It has the right to maintain high expectations from Somali political officials. Without their involvement, about which we can still wonder, nothing is possible.

Today, almost a year after Kampala and three months from the end of the transition period, where do we stand? At the political level, we are concerned. The road map had four main tasks, accompanied by specific timelines, which the Transitional Federal Institutions signed on to. Today, three of those four tasks have been set aside in order to focus all efforts on adopting a constitution and on reforming current institutions, thus putting an end to the transition period that began in 2004. Unfortunately, even in that single area, certain timelines that were set by the international community and the Somalis themselves have not been met and the political process is now delayed by several weeks.

We therefore need a new impetus, and that impetus begins with appointing members of a Somali Constituent Assembly. The clan leaders, currently meeting in Mogadishu, must move forward and put national interests before their own in order to appoint without delay Somalis who would represent all categories of society, in particular women, who will be part of the Assembly in charge of reviewing the draft constitution. That impetus would also involve finalizing the text of the draft constitution. The drafting experts must complete their work, bearing in mind two elements: first, this is a provisional text that could be subject to further improvement later on and, secondly, the text must respect human rights in accordance with Somalia's international commitments.

Of course, the end of the transition period is not to everyone's liking. Some seem to be interested in continuing the current instability in order to preserve political influence or to derive financial benefit. To those who want to prevent their compatriots from living in peace, the international community is today ready to say that they can no longer conspire with impunity. The joint letter from the United Nations, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, which was issued a few days ago by Mr. Mahiga, is very clear. Those who continue to undermine the political process will be subject to sanctions from States in the region and from the United Nations.

At the security level, much remains to be done. Mogadishu continues to be subject to sporadic attacks and a large part of the territory of Somalia is still not under the control of the Transitional Federal Government. But progress has been considerable. Thanks to the efforts of the AMISOM soldiers, Al-Shabaab has lost ground and life has resumed in the Somali capital. We must pay tribute to the Ugandan and Burundian contingents and to the action taken by Ethiopia.

We support their efforts. Thanks to the adoption of resolution 2036 (2012), AMISOM's means are being transformed. The force will finally have an airlift capacity and its troops will be significantly strengthened. The strengthening is made possible by greater support from the United Nations, but also support from the European Union, which, we must remember, has been financing for several years the entire salary of AMISOM troops, amounting to approximately $200 million per year. No other country in the world benefits from such support. I would like to urge States that would like to increase their support for security stabilization in Somalia to provide financial support for AMISOM soldiers alongside the European Union.

In the long-term, Somalia's security can only be ensured by Somalis themselves. The training of Somali national forces must be a priority. The European Union is fully engaged along this path in the framework of the European Union Training Mission for Somalia. A restructuring of Government forces and strengthening of the chain of command will still be necessary to make those forces more effective.

As the transition period is nearing its end, of course we have to strengthen our efforts for the development of Somalia, but it is also up to the Somali authorities and to the people themselves to do their share and chart their path. One of the challenges in the coming months will be the development of a new administration, both national and local, that will be able to provide basic services to the population, in particular in the zones freed from Al-Shabaab control, in order to establish the legitimacy of Somali authorities. It is up to the Transitional Federal Government to do its duty, as well as to meet the expectations of the Somali people. In that regard, we welcome the holding of the upcoming Istanbul conference, which we hope will be an opportunity to breathe new life into those issues.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to welcome the President of the Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Republic, Mr. Ahmed. We are grateful to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, Mr. Mahiga, for his assessment of the situation in Somalia.

In view of the impending conclusion of the transitional period, achieving the goals of stabilization and foundation building for Somali statehood requires more coordinated and vigorous actions on the part of the international community, as well as a mobilization of the political will of the Somali authorities. The country now has a real chance to reach a new level in its political process. It must take advantage of it and implement the road map on time on the basis of the Garoowe principles.

One element of major importance is the cohesiveness of the Transitional Federal Institutions. We commend the executive authorities' willingness to follow the measures agreed on for overcoming the crisis. The success of such efforts will depend greatly on the readiness of all political forces to refrain from settling scores, set aside their personal interests and mobilize efforts to advance the political process and strengthen Government authority in the liberated territories.

It is important to take the views of a broad cross-section of the Somali people into account and to work on drafting a new constitution on that basis. This would be a demonstration of genuine accountability and the capacity to function during this historically important period of the country's development. We believe that the provision of international aid must be tied to tangible progress in the peace process.

We must not forget the task of crushing Al-Shabaab as soon as possible. In that regard, we regret the loss of momentum in attacking the extremists' positions in the south and centre of the country. While the extremists are surrendering positions, they still control a large part of Somalia and are continuing their active resistance, strengthening alliances with local and foreign sympathizers alike, as attested to by the ongoing terrorist acts in Mogadishu. In this situation, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) remains a key element in the struggle with the extremists. Its rapid expansion, in accordance with resolution 2036 (2012), will not only make the process of ridding Somalia of Al-Shabaab irreversible, but will also help create the conditions necessary for further strengthening the Somali security forces, which will bear responsibility for the country's stability after AMISOM's departure.

As ever, illegal arms are still entering Somalia unimpeded, ratcheting up the spiral of violence. It is more important than ever to strengthen the arms embargo overall and to cut off the channels that supply arms to the extremists, including those operating from Libya and other turbulent regions in Africa and the Middle East. More thorough verification of compliance with the embargo is also needed. The acute humanitarian crisis in Somalia is not diminishing. Against the backdrop of the ongoing fight against Al-Shabaab, we cannot expect a drop in the number of refugees.

As the peace process advances and the extremists are marginalized, the challenge of economic development becomes increasingly stark. We hope that the forthcoming conference on Somalia in Istanbul will not only help to promote a settlement but will impart momentum to the country's economic development. We support measures designed to broaden the presence and coordinate the actions of the United Nations entities in Somalia, while taking all security needs into account, under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Augustine Mahiga.

Despite some reduction in the number of successful attacks, pirate activity along the coast of Somalia is still not declining. Piracy remains one of the chief destabilizing factors in the region and continues to inflict significant economic damage on the international community. A reliable solution to this problem is possible only through coordinated action on land and at sea within the framework of a comprehensive piracy strategy. Integral to that strategy would be the fight against impunity, through the creation of an effective mechanism for the criminal prosecution of pirates with international participation.

The Russian Federation will pursue its policy of providing comprehensive assistance to Somalia and participating actively in the international community's efforts to promote a settlement in Somalia.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): Let me first welcome President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed to this meeting. We greatly value this timely exchange of views

between the Council and the Somali leadership. The transition will end soon, and it is vital that we address all necessary issues. I would also like to welcome the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Mahiga, and to thank him for his exhaustive briefing and for his commitment and leadership under very difficult circumstances.

I will focus briefly on three points: first, the political process and the situation on the ground; secondly, the achievements of the African Union and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM); and, finally, the role of the international community and especially of the European Union (EU).

On my first point, with the end of the transitional period in sight, it is crucial that the targets laid down by the road map be achieved. Another extension of the deadline is inconceivable and unacceptable, and would certainly not be in the interest of Somalia and its people. We agree that some progress has been made, and in that regard I would like to commend the recently launched convention of Somali elders, who will select the members of the Constituent Assembly.

However, great challenges remain. We are worried about the ongoing infighting in and among the Transitional Federal Institutions. In particular, the continuing deadlock in the Transitional Federal Parliament is having troublesome effects on the whole transitional process. Let me be very clear — the international community has always supported Somalia, especially since the country has found itself in dire straits and dealing with instability. The United Nations has deployed some of the largest peacekeeping operations in the country, and many regional and individual actors have stood and still stand by the country and its people.

The past 20 years have taught us one lesson. There is no solution to the conflict without strong political will on the part of the Somali political actors themselves and without their earnest efforts to provide for a better, peaceful future for all Somalis. Looking at past and current support for Somalia, we simply do not agree that what is lacking is international support. Nor must such language be used as an excuse for delays and failures in the transitional process. There are many tasks remaining unresolved that do not even require financial support. Let me also stress that future support will depend on results. We cannot accept a call for more when there is no real progress.

Let me come to my second point. Three months ago, the Council reacted very swiftly in adopting resolution 2036 (2012), which endorsed the new AMISOM strategic concept and considerably enlarged the Mission's scope, mandate and support. That was another sign of the commitment of the United Nations, the Security Council and its members to AMISOM. We welcome AMISOM's achievements and reiterate our strong support for the Mission. In the past, my country has contributed considerably to it and will continue to do so, bilaterally and within the framework of the European Union.

AMISOM has been key to improvements in the security situation in Somalia, and without it we would not be where we are today. Apart from its military achievements, the Mission has contributed to the establishment of the Somali National Security Forces. Now, it is essential that the Transitional Federal Government finally succeed in establishing a functioning command-and-control structure. The Government and the Somali forces must become less dependent on AMISOM. Responsibilities need to be handed over to national forces and administrations, especially in regions where Al-Shabaab has been driven out.

Let me come to my final point. As I mentioned earlier, Germany has supported Somalia, among others, through the European Union. In that context, I would like to recall the substantial contributions the European Union has made so far. The training of Somali security forces in Uganda by the European Union Training Mission for Somalia, in close cooperation with AMISOM, is only one example. Furthermore, and in addition to its counter-piracy engagement at sea, the European Union will launch an additional mission to enhance the capabilities of the States in the region in the field of maritime security and to develop their legal frameworks. In Somalia, in addition to support for the legal system, a coastal police force will be trained in order to help end the criminal activities of pirates that add to the instability and insecurity in Somalia, and thereby to the misery of Somalia's people.

The transitional process will end in August. In the few weeks that are left, it is crucial to focus and work effectively to achieve that goal. That is first and foremost the responsibility of the Somalis themselves. They can be assured that the international community will continue to support them.

Mr. Menan (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to welcome to New York the President of the Somali Republic, His Excellency Mr. Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, whose participation in this meeting of the Council testifies to his Government's commitment to all initiatives aimed at finding a solution to the long-standing crisis in Somalia. I would also like to thank Ambassador Augustine Mahiga for his detailed briefing, his presentation of the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia (S/2012/283) and his ongoing commitment in support of peace and stability in the country.

The commitment of the international community to peace and institution-building in Somalia since the last report (S/2012/74) gives grounds for optimism about the country's future in the light of the progress made, even if there remains a need for further progress in the transition process. That commitment has allowed the Transitional Federal Government and its allied forces to exercise their authority beyond Mogadishu, particularly in important strategic cities in the south and central part of Somalia and in newly recovered areas. Moreover, real progress has been made in terms of security, the drafting of the constitution, political openness and reconciliation and good governance, despite the delay in implementing the road map due to the lack of resources and the crisis that now exists within the Transitional Federal Parliament.

Notwithstanding that progress, a number of important questions remain with respect to the implementation of the agreed principles. For example, we would mention here the need not to limit provisions in the draft constitution having to do with fundamental rights and freedoms. Moreover, as was noted by the International Contact Group on Somalia and the London Conference, it is necessary to take appropriate measures against spoilers of the peace process.

In terms of security, despite repeated attacks in March, especially the explosion that took place in April at the National Theatre of Mogadishu, which the Council firmly condemned in a press release, it is undeniable that Al-Shabaab continues to lose ground, even while it has aligned itself with other militia in Puntland. As indicated in the report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission of 20 March, the defections that have taken place in its ranks are likely to further weaken that terrorist movement.

None of that would have been possible without the work done by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), whose operational effectiveness allowed for the achievement of encouraging results. In that respect, Togo welcomes the establishment of the Military Operations Coordinating Committee, whose cooperation with other bodies has allowed the structure of the enhanced force headquarters to be reworked and wide-scale operations to be conducted in a number of sectors.

The hope that is being reborn in Somalia thanks to the efforts of the Transitional Federal Government and the international community must not lead us to overlook the fact that it is primarily up to the Somalis themselves to provide for the security of their country. They are the only ones who can sustainably establish the security and stability that the population has aspired to for a number of decades. It is also urgent to achieve an independent security sector as soon as possible. We share the opinion that the independence of the sector requires strategic planning and orientation, training and equipping the military and the police, modernizing the justice and prison systems, and establishing a programme for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants who have abandoned Somali rebel groups. Togo takes this opportunity to once again thank the European Union, the United States, the United Kingdom and all other partners that are providing different forms of substantial support to AMISOM and to the Somali Government forces.

The report indicates that piracy continues in the high-risk area and is seen through increasingly ambitious attacks, a hardening of violence and an upsurge in the amounts of ransom demanded. Togo believes that piracy can only be eliminated by combining enforcement activities and broader efforts for stabilization in Somalia, by promoting good governance and the rule of law, by strengthening Government institutions and by promoting socio-economic development.

All of those actions require substantial logistical and financial means, which neither Somalia nor the States of the subregion can find by themselves. External partners therefore need to continue to support those States in the fight which, once won, will be beneficial not only for peace in the subregion but also for freedom of commerce and navigation.

On the humanitarian side, Al-Shabaab's ban imposed on United Nations humanitarian organizations and non-governmental organizations working in areas under their control remains in force, as indicated in the report. The ban contributes to the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the regions in the southern part of the country, which is the homeland of the vast majority of those affected by the crisis, who are suffering in particular from malnutrition.

Moreover, reports indicate that targeting killings by Al Shabaab are taking place in areas they have recently lost. Cases of rape and sexual violence against displaced women and girls have also been noted. Togo believes that Al-Shabaab's violent behaviour in areas they are losing is unacceptable and requires more vigilance and spontaneous reactions from Government forces and AMISOM in securing areas taken from the terrorist organization.

Togo welcomes the 23 March Human Rights Council resolution requesting the Secretary-General to draft a report containing concrete proposals for a more integrated approach across the United Nations system for the protection and promotion of human rights in Somalia. We hope that the international conference on Somalia to be held in a few days in Turkey will be an opportunity to further debate the question.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my country's appreciation to the troop-contributing countries, AMISOM, donor countries and organizations for the invaluable sacrifices they continue to make to provide for a return of stability to Somalia and to maintain peace and security in the entire Horn of Africa region.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to welcome the presence here today of His Excellency President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed and to thank him for having shared with Council members his assessment of the situation in his country, his concerns and his expectations from the international community. I would also like to thank Mr. Augustine Mahiga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his commitment and his dedication to his mission of peace and reconciliation in Somalia.

Morocco welcomes the ongoing interest that the Security Council is attaching to Somalia in order to assist a country that has been ravaged by a bloody war for 20 years and to bring its people out of violence and instability. That interest has been amply shown by the London Conference held on 23 February, the results of which, we hope, will be consolidated and built upon by the Istanbul conference scheduled for the 31 May.

Morocco is pleased with the steps taken and the progress made on the political and security fronts in Somalia, which have been implemented through establishing the Djibouti peace process and the road map in order to turn the page on the transition. The openness of the Transitional Federal Government in the areas it has recovered and the agreement on modalities for a Constituent Assembly represent real progress for the Somali people.

However, in spite of that progress, the situation remains fragile and reversible, as has been noted by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, because not only do some portions of the national territory remain outside of the control of the central Government, but the central Government is confronted with terrorist acts by Al-Shabaab, particularly in the north of the country, with all of the human and humanitarian consequences flowing from it for hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons.

My country emphatically condemns the terrorist activities of Al-Shabaab and the acts of piracy that have been staged off the shores of Somalia in spite of the efforts of the international community to secure the waters off the Horn of Africa. These efforts, both on land and on sea, need to be strengthened and bolstered by the establishment of the rule of law and capacity-building for the Somali Government in this area.

Morocco stands in solidarity with the people of Somalia and supports their legitimate aspirations to peace and stability. My country remains committed to respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and national unity of Somalia. However, meeting these objectives will require an inclusive dialogue, the will to reconcile, and respect for the commitments undertaken under the peace agreement, the road map and the Kampala Accord to end the transitional period. In this respect, we call on all parties to intensify their efforts to finalize the draft constitution and create the conditions for elections to take place smoothly. These timetables are critical to opening up reassuring and promising prospects for the post-transition period.

Somalia finds itself at a crucial juncture, as noted by all Council members. Somalis, as it stands, must overcome their differences and put their country's peace, stability, reconciliation and unity above their personal ambitions and partisan differences. They will need to exhibit the political will to unite to confront the challenges of terrorism, insecurity and threats to the unity of the country.

Somalia owes a great deal to the United Nations and to the international community for the progress it has made to date in the political and security fields and for the assistance generously provided to displaced persons. In particular, we welcome the efforts of the African Union Mission in Somalia, the United Nations Political Office for Somalia, which has headquartered in Mogadishu since 24 February, and the Committee established pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009), chaired by the Permanent Representative of India.

However, more solidarity and commitment are required on the part of the international community to make the critical period immediately following the end of the transitional period one in which the gains made thus far are maintained and consolidated. Morocco and all of Africa are prepared to pursue their efforts to support the people of Somalia in its quest for stability, unity and reconciliation.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate only three months before the end of the transitional period in August. Allow me to also welcome and commend the statements made by His Excellency Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, President of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, and Mr. Augustine Mahiga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia, whose briefing was a clear illustration of the situation and the current challenges.

While we view with optimism the progress made in the implementation of certain tasks established in the road map, we understand that the current humanitarian, political and military situation in Somalia is not free from risks or difficulties. Given the fragile situation, we must redouble our efforts to strengthen the gains we have made in different areas and to lay the foundations for restoring peace and stability and fostering sustainable social and economic development.

Although the security situation, especially in Mogadishu, has improved, the situation in the outskirts of the city and in some parts of the south and centre of Somalia remains unstable. Despite the progress made by the Somali forces and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the terrorist attacks of Al-Shabaab continue to be a serious threat for the Transitional Federal Institutions, the AMISOM forces and the political process itself.

It is increasingly important to effectively use the mechanisms established by the Organization, including the regime under resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009), to impose appropriate measures on internal and external actors seeking to undermine the peace and reconciliation process in Somalia; to identify the leaders of armed groups who impede the provision of, access to and distribution of humanitarian assistance; and to apply the relevant sanctions in order to restrict the charcoal trade. It is also crucial to step up our monitoring and identification of arms embargo violations and to impose selective sanctions, when necessary, in order to reduce the effects that this could have in the Somali context.

We acknowledge the significant contribution of AMISOM to the quest for peace in Somalia. We note the progress achieved with the expansion of AMISOM after the adoption of resolution 2036 (2012) and its deployment beyond Mogadishu for the first time since its establishment. Nonetheless, we must persevere in our efforts to establish a presence in the four sectors established under the strategic concept. It is also crucial to continue to provide equipment, technical assistance and financing for the salaries of the troops and unconditional financing for the Mission through the United Nations Trust Fund for AMISOM.

Similarly, we must provide greater technical, financial and training resources to the Transitional Federal Government forces so that they can deploy on land and in coastal waters and play a more important role in the operations under way.

Taking the long-term perspective, any sound and lasting solution to the problem of piracy off the coast of Somalia must be part of a broader initiative aimed at national institutional capacity-building in which the economic, security, judicial and penal dimensions are implemented simultaneously.

We must harmonize and synchronize political and military efforts with a view to a genuine stabilization

of the situation in Somalia. We therefore feel that it is important to support the Transitional Federal Government's efforts to reach areas that were recently recovered, and in particular the national policy for the reconciliation and stabilization of the freed areas in the south and centre of Somalia.

Given the imminent end of the transitional period, Somali leaders must work together, set aside their differences, put the interests of the Somali people before their own personal interests, and thereby complete the implementation of the road map on schedule. A commitment in this direction will pave the way for them to move together towards a general and lasting solution to the situation in Somalia in this critical phase of the political process.

While the Transitional Federal Government has the primary responsibility for restoring security, political stability, the rule of law and economic development, it is also crucial that the international community continue to provide its support for institutional strengthening and national capacity-building. The upcoming Conference on Somalia to be held in Istanbul will be an ideal forum in which to tackle the immediate challenges facing Somalia and to begin to plan for long-term solutions that would establish the conditions to foster sustainable economic and social development.

In conclusion, I would like to urge the Somali authorities and other relevant actors to continue to play a constructive role and to comply with their obligations in implementing the road map so that the deadlines set for the end of the transition period in August can be met. The impetus for and the vision of a stable and stronger Somali State must be upheld as the primary long-term objective.

Mr. Cabral (Portugal): I would like to thank Special Representative Augustine Mahiga for his very helpful briefing and analysis. Allow me also to thank His Excellency President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed for his presence and for his statement.

Portugal welcomes the progress made to date in the implementation of the Kampala road map. However, we are concerned about delays in implementing some of its key tasks, as well as the negative impact of the long-lasting impasse in the Transitional Federal Parliament. With only three months to go until the end of the political transition in Somalia, we must reiterate that it is up to the Somali leadership to seize this opportunity and to implement its commitments to ensure that the 20 August deadline is met.

It is crucial that the Somali authorities implement the Garoowe principles, which provide a solid basis for the way forward with the establishment of new institutions and the adoption of a new constitution by a representative Constituent Assembly in full transparency. The constitution, subject to a national referendum in due course, must be underpinned by respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights of women and of persons belonging to minorities, and must create a framework for all Somalis to take part in public life. At the same time, it is essential to guarantee the accessibility and deliverance of basic services to the population, to support sustainable peace and development, to build an effective Government, and to re-establish an independent judiciary.

While the international community's will and determination in continuing to support the Somali people are clear, as demonstrated by the continuous hard work of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Augustine Mahiga, whose efforts I wish to commend, and by the upcoming Istanbul Conference on 31 May and 1 June, as well as the International Somalia Contact Group meeting in Rome on 2 and 3 July, responsibility for the delivery of a political solution lies with the Somalis themselves. Portugal echoes the Secretary-General's view that appropriate action should be taken against those who are judged to be blocking or undermining progress.

Portugal recognizes and commends the crucial role of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in bringing security to the country. The adoption of resolution 2036 (2012) and the significant strengthening of AMISOM that it authorized are a clear expression of the political importance and appropriateness of the continued and significant support to allow the Mission to fulfil its mandate. Through the United Nations and the European Union, Portugal will continue its support to AMISOM.

In that regard, allow me to call on the new troop-contributing countries to fully integrate their forces into the AMISOM command and control structure, in line with the aforementioned resolution. Allow me also to call on other donors to contribute to sustainable funding for AMISOM and to provide force enablers to allow the Mission to operate effectively.

Furthermore, I would like to acknowledge the efforts made to date by all partners involved in military action in Somalia to minimize the negative impact of military intervention on Somali civilians and to protect their human rights. I encourage them to continue to do so.

The unbroken commitment of the Somali authorities to effective governance and security is central to consolidating AMISOM's military gains on the ground and to ensuring the governance of territories previously under Al-Shabaab rule. We take this opportunity to call on the Transitional Federal Institutions to fully embrace the leadership of that process. Through the European Union Training Mission, to which Portugal will provide 16 military troops in 2012, we will continue to support the development of the Somali national security forces. We encourage other donors to join that process.

Likewise, we recall the importance of continued support and humanitarian assistance to Somalia. We are concerned about the impoverishment of the population owing to the prevailing conflict and the persistent drought, as well as the implications of such a situation with the growing number of refugees in the region. As the Secretary-General underlines in his report (S/2012/283), the humanitarian situation continues to be fragile and the progress made remains reversible. Portugal urges all parties to ensure full and unhindered access for humanitarian aid across the country so that vulnerable people can be reached.

As the security and political situation registers progress, the achievements made to date in Somalia will only be sustainable if all stakeholders continue to pursue a multifaceted response to the country's underlying causes of instability, including by building stability at the local level and by stepping up the action to tackle the threats posed by piracy and terrorism.

Portugal has always argued that piracy is a problem of organized crime, with onshore roots in Somalia. Its causes are related to the conflict that has ravaged Somalia for over two decades and the severe impoverishment of the population, particularly the coastal communities. We are especially worried about the expansion of piracy attacks throughout the Indian Ocean, reaching as far south as the coast of Mozambique and eastwards towards the shores of India.

In concluding, allow me to underline that time is of the essence. As the Secretary-General clearly said, despite the challenges, there is a real opportunity to move the country to a new phase in the political process. For that to happen, Somali leaders must unite in the commitment to ending the transition in August.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we would like to welcome the President of the Transitional Federal Government, His Excellency Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, and to thank him for his presence. It reaffirms his commitment to the struggle to resolve the conflict that has devastated his country for many years. We also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Augustine Mahiga, for presenting the report before us (S/2012/283) and for his tireless work as head of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia.

Over several months, we have seen encouraging signs and important and positive developments in Somalia, in particular in the context of its situation in recent years. We acknowledge that the coming months represent a possible turning point for the future of Somalia, and hence for the entire Horn of Africa region.

Guatemala welcomes the efforts made to date, which have the potential to launch a new phase in the quest for stability and peace. From our own past experiences, we understand the importance of acting decisively and resolutely and of not tolerating any impediment that could overturn the set goals. Allow me to make a few specific comments.

On the implementation of the road map, my delegation believes concluding the drafting and the adoption of the new constitution to be a priority. The adoption of the constitution is also a starting point for national reconciliation. We commend efforts to establish the Constituent Assembly, which is a fundamental requirement for the process to succeed. The new interim constitution should reflect the aspirations of all Somali people and must meet international standards of human rights, including the rights of women and children.

The election of the members of the Constituent Assembly and the new parliament is of paramount importance. The credibility and legitimacy of those bodies depend on it. Members must represent the broad diversity of the Somali people.

Guatemala considers it essential to end the transitional period on 20 August, in line with the road map and as reaffirmed in Garoowe Conferences I and II

and Gaalkacyo. We agree with the Special Representative of Secretary-General that the transition should be Somali-led. At the same time, the people of Somalia must know that that the international community, and especially the Security Council, will support them throughout the peace process.

Like other delegations, we take note of the joint letter from the United Nations, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. Resolution 2036 (2012) reaffirms the decision of the Security Council to take action against internal and external actors involved in actions aimed at undermining the peace process. My delegation will support all actions necessary to ensure the full implementation of the road map and to end the transition by 20 August. There can be no more extensions.

On the security strategy, we believe that the peace process largely depends on the successful expansion of the security strategy across Somalia. We believe that the strategic coordination and expanded operations of AMISOM are already showing positive results, and hope for its timely deployment to the sectors outlined in paragraph 91 of the Secretary-General's report. We fully support the expansion and implementation of stabilization plans to the recovered areas. The establishment of local administrations capable of providing basic services to their population will be essential. We are grateful to all international partners for their continued support to Somalia, in particular to the troop-contributing countries for their sacrifices, and to donor countries.

To ensure that the political process continues, we must redouble our efforts to end terrorism. Despite the successful military operations of AMISOM, Al-Shabaab is still a threat, attacking innocent Somalis and others. Piracy off the coast of Somalia and the Gulf of Aden continues to pose a serious threat to maritime safety and economic development of countries in the region. We reiterate that piracy is a consequence of the challenges facing Somalia on land. It is therefore important that the Security Council support Somalia in addressing the underlying causes of piracy. Although the number of acts of piracy has decreased, thanks to the concrete measures taken, it is disturbing to note that criminal activity is still entrenched, as mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General, and that there are still many cases of piracy and hostage-taking, even beyond the coast of Somalia.

On the humanitarian situation, although we are pleased that Somalia is no longer suffering from famine, the situation remains fragile. We hope that by improving the security situation, conditions conducive to undertaking unhindered humanitarian activities will increase, especially considering that Al-Shabaab continues to prevent several humanitarian organizations from working in the areas it controls, which significantly hampers the provision of assistance to people in need. The international community needs to show greater solidarity with the people of Somalia regarding the provision of humanitarian assistance.

We remain concerned in particular by the plight of Somali women and children, many of whom are vulnerable to higher levels of sexual violence because of their gender. We urge the international community to continue to provide vital assistance to these and others in need in Somalia and its neighbours.

Finally, we commend the Government of Turkey and the Secretary-General for organizing the next conference in Istanbul at such a crucial moment for Somalia. We will be represented at the meeting.

Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri (India): Let me begin by welcoming President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed to the Security Council. His participation and statement in the meeting today underscore the commitment that the leadership of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) has shown towards the stabilization of the situation in Somalia. I would also like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Augustine Mahiga for his insightful briefing.

Clearly, the political process in Somalia has entered a decisive phase towards ending the transition in August. Against this backdrop, today's debate should help the Council to take stock of the progress made so far in the implementation of the road map, identify the challenges, and decide on the ways and means to address those challenges.

During the past year, significant progress has been made by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the TFG and allied forces in the security sector. Though Al-Shabaab has carried out some spectacular terrorist attacks, security gains have by and large been sustained in Mogadishu. This has facilitated the revival of economic activities. The relocation of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia to Mogadishu in January this year was an important milestone in this regard. Security forces, led by

AMISOM and assisted by Kenyan and Ethiopian troops, have also recovered several areas from Al-Shabaab in southern and central Somalia. In this connection, strengthening AMISOM with more predictable and sustainable resources, in accordance with resolution 2036 (2012), should facilitate further gains against Al-Shabaab.

Al-Shabaab, however, remains a potent force and, with its recent affiliation with Al-Qaida continues to pose a serious threat to peace and security in Somalia and the larger region. The recent attacks in Mogadishu and southern Somalia confirm its capability. It is therefore necessary to expedite stabilization and reconciliation in the liberated areas and to restrict sources of Al-Shabaab's revenue and weapons. All parties should strictly implement the ban on the trade in charcoal, in accordance with resolution 2036 (2012). We have noted that the TFG has set up district security committees as part of its outreach efforts in the liberated areas. We think that adoption of a national security and stabilization plan will facilitate stabilization and reconciliation in these areas and should be expedited.

Given the fragile security situation, our continued support to AMISOM remains critical, in addition to the capacity-building of Somali security forces. We have noted the progress made towards the full deployment of AMISOM's mandated strength and its deployment plans. We commend the troop-contributing countries for their commitments in that regard and we hope that the Council will further expand its support for AMISOM in accordance with the recommendations of the African Union (AU). India, on its part, made an uncaveated contribution of $2 million in 2011 to the AU and United Nations Trust Funds for AMISOM, and will make another contribution of $1 million this year.

The gains on the security front need to be matched by the progress on the political track. We hope that the Transitional Federal Institutions and other Somali stakeholders will fully cooperate and implement the decisions of the first and second Garoowe Consultative Constitutional Conferences in a time-bound manner. In that regard, we have taken note of efforts that are being made in Mogadishu and the regions and hope that those efforts are as broad-based as possible to ensure inclusivity in the process by taking into consideration the traditional social structure and accommodating existing regional authorities into the federal system.

The problem of piracy and hostage-taking off the coast of Somalia remains a matter of serious concern for India. In spite of counter-piracy measures, the number of attempted pirate attacks increased by 65 per cent in 2011. Pirates are currently holding 16 ships and nearly 300 hostages. We would therefore like to reiterate the need for the international community to adopt a comprehensive counter-piracy strategy that also addresses the inhuman conditions in which pirates hold hostages.

In conclusion, I would like to say that, as we approach the end of transition in Somalia, the international community, and the United Nations in particular, should remain vigilant of forces that have the potential to undermine the process. The international community should also remain engaged with Somali stakeholders and provide assistance in political, security and humanitarian spheres, as required by the post-transition Somali authorities. As noted by the Secretary General, the investment of the international community will be fundamental to the long-term recovery and development of Somalia. In that regard, we welcome the conference scheduled to be held in Istanbul later this month and hope that it will build on the gains of the London Conference held in February.

India, for its part, will continue to partner with all stakeholders for the stabilization of the situation in Somalia. India will also continue to extend its support for the capacity-building of Somali national institutions through human resources development. We recently increased the number of scholarships for Somali students and experts. We will also continue our cooperation in the information technology sector in Somalia.

We hope that, with our collective efforts, the people of Somalia will be able to turn a new page in their history in August and achieve sustainable peace and enduring stability in the country.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Mr. Mahiga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, for his briefing. I would also like to welcome to this meeting His Excellency Mr. Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, President of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia.

The Somali peace process is at a key stage. We welcome the steady progress made in implementing the road map on ending the transition period, the headway made in efforts to draft a constitution and hold

parliamentary elections, the military gains that have been achieved and the noteworthy improvement in the humanitarian situation in the country. We also note that the peace process continues to face many difficulties. Tensions have increased within the Transitional Federal Parliament, with and adverse impact on the implementation of the road map. The potential for new conflicts is emerging in various regions. And the humanitarian situation in Somalia continues to be fragile.

China believes that national reconciliation is the only way to restore peace and stability in Somalia. We support Somalia in continuing to implement the Transitional Federal Charter, the Djibouti Agreement, the Kampala Accord and the Garoowe principles, as well as in fully implementing the road map and ending the transitional period on time. We hope that the parties in Somalia will place the interests of the country and its people first and, in a spirit of solidarity and reconciliation, overcome differences through dialogue and consultation as soon as possible, so as not to unnecessarily disrupt the peace process.

We support the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in further enhancing capacity-building in order that it can govern effectively the entire territory of Somalia as soon as possible. We hope that the parties in Somalia will reject violence and join the peace process unconditionally at the earliest possible moment.

In the current circumstances, the international community should continue to support the mediation efforts of the United Nations, the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, support the TFG in strengthening capacity-building, and encourage the parties to implement the road map in good faith. China welcomes the AU report published on 20 March on its Mission in Somalia. We hope that the United Nations will continue to strengthen its logistical support to the Mission and to effectively implement resolution 2036 (2012). We welcome the successful London Conference on Somalia and look forward to the same positive results at the conference to be held later this month in Istanbul.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for arranging today's meeting. We warmly welcome His Excellency President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed to the Security Council and thank him for his briefing. Our appreciation also goes to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Augustine Mahiga and his team for their important work in Somalia.

With the approaching end of the transition period, in three months' time, a new page is being turned in the history of Somalia. It is our shared hope that August will be a propitious month with regard to ending the conflict and bringing lasting peace to Somalia.

Domestic political consensus among all Somali stakeholders is essential to usher in a new era. We recognize the progress achieved at the two Conferences held in Garoowe and at the follow-up meetings to work for a representative post-transition Government in Somalia, in line with the Transitional Federal Charter, the Djibouti Agreement, the Kampala Accord and the transition road map.

Each step in that challenging journey is invaluable, since progress towards constitutional development and State-building is fraught with myriad obstacles. No one should underestimate the complexity of addressing such intricate and complex issues as the nature of federalism, the codification of religious and tribal traditions and the composition of the Constituent Assembly. We would therefore like to send a message of encouragement and solidarity to the Somali people and their leadership at this critical hour.

In the same vein, it is also essential for all political stakeholders in Somalia to seize this moment in history, rise above their differences and work towards a broader agreement on pending road map issues. The unique opportunity that is presenting itself in form of unanimity on the broad contour of future governance and the political framework, as well as the sustained engagement of international community, must not be lost.

Political progress in Somalia will remain fragile without corresponding gains in the area of security. The role of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in ensuring security and development, and thereby consolidating political gains, is absolutely critical. The African Union and countries contributing troops to AMISOM deserve special praise and all possible assistance. We welcome the increased role of AMISOM in enhancing the effectiveness of Somali forces.

The Secretary-General's latest report on Somalia (S/212/283) rightly underscores the scarcity of resources as undermining progress on the integration of

Somalia's armed forces, on the development of civilian police and justice systems and on programmes for demobilized combatants. The Secretary-General has also highlighted the fact that, besides the impasse within the Transitional Federal Parliament, the lack of resources also obstructs the smooth implementation of the road map. While appreciating all financial contributions made in Somalia, we hope that the issue of resources will merit our due attention, as rightly pointed out by President Ahmed, who called for financial and capacity-building support for various institutions of Somalia.

Pakistan supports a comprehensive approach to addressing maritime piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden. We have consistently emphasized the need to tackle that menace by addressing its root causes, which include, inter alia, economic downturn, unemployment and environmental damage to Somali coastal areas. To counter piracy, we support the addition of a maritime component to AMISOM, as well as the actions of the international naval coalition against piracy. Pakistan is an active participant in that coalition. We also urge that we not lose sight of the plight of many hostages, including Pakistani nationals, being held by the pirates and that we work towards their early release. Any help that the Government of Somalia can possibly extend in that regard would be highly appreciated. The entire Pakistani nation is worried about the hostages. The President of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, is personally overseeing efforts for their release.

We share the concerns expressed by previous speakers about the humanitarian situation in Somalia. Despite improvement with regard to the famine situation, humanitarian challenges persist and require our sustained attention.

In conclusion, we commend the initiative of Turkey in hosting the forthcoming Istanbul conference on Somalia. We hope that the event will contribute to realizing the aspirations of the Somali people for a better life and future. We also hope that it will promote the objective of long-term peace and stability in Somalia with full respect for its unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We wish the initiative every success.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Azerbaijan.

At the outset, I would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, President of the Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Republic, and to thank him for his statement. We are also grateful to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Augustine Mahiga for his briefing and for presenting the report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/283).

I would like to reiterate to the Somali authorities our strong support for their efforts to overcome difficulties, to achieve reconciliation and to build a secure, stable, united, democratic and prosperous nation. Azerbaijan stresses the importance of a consistent, strong commitment on the part of the Security Council and the broader international community to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and unity of Somalia.

We welcome the progress in recent months on the political and security fronts in Somalia, which confirms the commitment of the Transitional Federal Government to the implementation of the road map to end the transition. We are encouraged by the fact that, despite some difficulties and delays, the implementation of the road map is proceeding. Considerable tasks have been accomplished. As the Secretary-General notes in his report, there is a real opportunity, which must be seized, to move the country to a new phase in the political process.

It is obvious that Somalia is responsible for its own peace, stability, development and prosperity and that the leadership and all political stakeholders in Somalia must unite in the commitment to ending the transition in August and to addressing the challenges ahead. At the same time, continued international support to the process remains critical.

Azerbaijan pays tribute to the United Nations, the African Union, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the troop-contributing countries for their continuing commitment to bringing peace and stability to the country. We are encouraged by the further consolidation of the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union. I would also like to commend the Organization of Islamic Cooperation for its contribution to achieving peace and national reconciliation in Somalia and for mobilizing assistance for the urgent needs of the peoples affected by the humanitarian crisis in that country.

Both the International Contact Group on Somalia and the London Conference highlighted the need for action against spoilers of the peace process. It is crucial to continue all necessary efforts to effectively address the threats and challenges to the successful implementation of the road map, including through supporting and implementing measures against those internal and external actors or groups who seek to undermine or block the peace process in Somalia.

Non-conventional attacks by Al-Shabaab are a matter of serious concern, as are the reports about its announced strengthened alliance with Al-Qaida and other militia groups in the country. As Somali forces and AMISOM continue to make territorial gains, it is critical, among other measures, to continue assisting them to build their capacity to effectively confront and prevent asymmetric attacks and to improve civilian security.

The long-awaited durable peace in Somalia demands the economic recovery of the country through integrated national and international efforts. We concur with the Secretary-General that the end of the transition should encourage the international community to invest seriously in the long-term recovery and development of Somalia. We look forward to the Istanbul conference and its outcome as a next important milestone in the international community's collaboration for the sake of peace and development in Somalia.

The humanitarian situation in Somalia requires continued attention. We stress the importance of lasting support to Somalia in that regard, as well as the need to redouble efforts to find long-term solutions for internally displaced persons.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 12:40 p.m.